

Subterranean Wonders



Mammoth Cave
and
Colossal Cavern
Kentucky

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Subterranean Wonders



MAMMOTH CAVE *and*
COLOSSAL CAVERN
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Subterranean Wonders of Kentucky



VAUGHAN'S DOME, COLOSSAL CAVERN

SUBTERRANEAN WONDERS



THE wonderful work of water in sculpturing the surface of the earth is matter of common observation and of common remark. Hill and valley, gorge, canon and waterfall, all have been seen in intimate relation; no rock so hard that it can forever resist the action of the stream; no mountain mass so great that it will not some time yield entirely to water; no valley so deep it may not be graven deeper or even filled to top by the transporting power of running streams. These changes all occur on the surface, and from our familiarity with them fail, often, to engage our close attention.

But there is no rock so dense that through it water will not pass; no union of particles so intimate but the secret chemical processes of the world beneath can sever them; no place where all conditions of ordinary change associated with surface laws are so variable as in the underground world.

The visitor to these caverns must not forget the surface world when he walks through their immense gorges, their magnificent avenues, their Titanic halls, their star-bedecked domes. On every hand he will see a wealth of features which always emphasize the aspects of the outer world and explain them in a new language.

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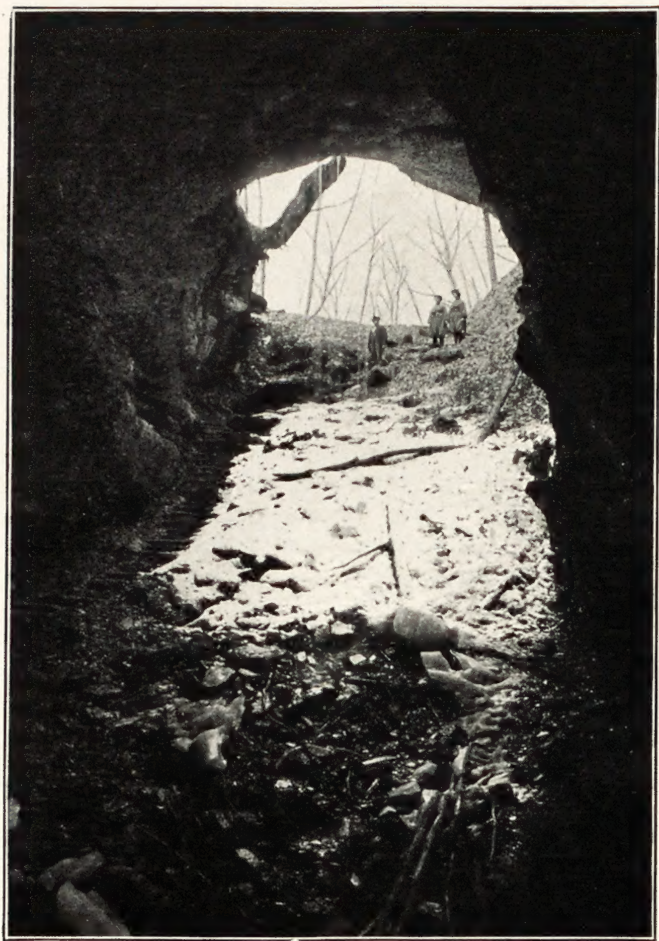
He will see solution so slow that it is measured by tens of thousands of decades; he will note crystallization so tedious that he will be driven to madness should he attempt to compass the years that have passed since the process began. Should he question the fossil forms which sometimes thickly stud the cliffs and ledges along which he will pass, they might tell to him a story beside which the wildest creation of the Orient would appear but as a tale of the nursery. In a thousand ways will he be impressed with the persistency of Nature's forceful methods. If he be a man accustomed to reflection he will come to the upper world a wiser man; if he be of poetic turn the sombre shades through which he has just passed, the great avenues opening beyond into regions of infinite gloom, the lovely crystals "of purest ray serene" that reflect the radiance of his light into still another corner of eternal darkness, and instead of revealing its outlines or a new beauty but extends its bounds, then his fancy will take a new direction and his poems a different tenor.

Of all the natural wonders none are more interesting to the present generation than the wonderful caves and caverns that are to be found in various localities. The interest in these subterranean wonders is attested by the large number of persons who are constantly visiting them, and the time and money spent by those of a scientific turn of mind in studying the rocks, air currents and animal life that exist in these most interesting

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places. Probably the greatest number and most magnificent caverns in the world are found on the North American continent, most of them being located in the United States. Thousands of people from this country and from foreign countries have visited Mammoth Cave, Wyandotte Cave and the Luray Caverns, and innumerable articles descriptive of them have appeared in various newspapers, magazines and booklets in recent years. The one locality in this country in which is to be found without doubt the greatest number of caverns is in Edmondson County, Kentucky, about ninety miles south of Louisville. Underlying nearly the whole county are innumerable caves, some vast in extent, some small. It is said that there are not less than ninety caves within this limited territory that have been explored. Mammoth Cave is the largest of them all; Colossal Cavern the next largest in extent, but far more magnificent and beautiful.

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LOOKING OUT THROUGH ENTRANCE TO MAMMOTH CAVE

M A M M O T H C A V E



AMMOTH CAVE owes its discovery to an accident, so the story goes, which happened in the year 1809. It is the old story of a hunter and a bear, the pursuer and the pursued. The bear was wounded and sought its lair in a vain endeavor to escape. Hutchins, for such was the hunter's name, lost no time in acquainting others with this important discovery, and Mammoth Cave became both a fact of history and of science. It is strange to relate that its first exploitation was connected with simply mercenary motives and that saltpetre, intended for use in gunpowder and connected with the war of 1812, was the incentive that led to more complete examination. The men who mined the soft soil, rich in nitre, are the men who first gave to the outside world any reliable information of the great extent of this now famous world's wonder. Albeit their stories savored of the wonderful to an extent that many pronounced them romances, a knowledge of the cave that was really quite exact became common property and the immense cavern soon took its place among the great natural features of Earth.

A visit to Mammoth Cave constitutes a unique experience in one's search of pleasure and the marvelous. From the moment of arrival at the quaint old hostelry,

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MARTHA WASHINGTON STATUE

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which dates so far back toward the beginning of the century that it is really a part of the history of the cavern, to the last backward look which is always given when the top of the rough stairway of rock, at the entrance, is reached on the return from the depths, there is continuous surprise, new experience, pleasant memories, not altogether unmixed with regret. The surroundings are not very unlike those which the first visitors saw. The old lumbering stage-coach has given way to the modern railway, with its comforts and speed; the trees of the forest are larger, but just as numerous; the wild flowers spring up as abundantly and liven the landscape as charmingly now as formerly; the woods are as full of feathered songsters; the neighboring river as prolific in brilliant and graceful fish, the cliffs which line its course as grand and glorious as when Hutchins first shot that famous bear.

Within the cavern the changes which have occurred since the days of saltpetre mining are less conspicuous still. In every essential respect the visitor sees the same features, the same angles, the same crystals—save where early vandal hands have robbed some of the alcoves and halls of their beautiful forms—the same springs gush forth from dark recesses, and the same streams disappear with many a dash and reverberation into the same pits and darksome crevices. The very pipes and supports used by the workers in “peter-dirt” stand now as when left by them nearly a century ago.

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EXIT OF CORKSCREW INTO MAMMOTH CAVE

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The famed houses in which the unfortunate consumptives sought relief from a malady which alone needed sunshine for momentary respite, but which no skill or art of man could stay, still stand on the left in the great recess called the Main Cave. The tracks made by feet of patient oxen and ruts worn by wheel of creaking wagon still remain to tell of underground toil in a gloom not less than that of famed Tartarus. The rock piled high on either side for a distance of a half mile or more tell of the work needed to get the much-sought nitrate to the upper world. Rude hieroglyphic scratches on walls tell of Bishop, of Brantsford, of Miller and others who first sought to unravel the mysteries of its branching avenues or to sound the depths of its solitary recesses. Occasionally, even yet, fragments of half-burned reeds, a lost moccasin, a wooden bowl, tell of visits of aborigines long before foot of civilized man had awakened the echoes of the lofty domes. Change there has been, but it is so slow, so secret, if one please, that impressions formed three-quarters of a century ago are paralleled by those which are awakened to-day. There is only that change which comes from wider acquaintance with the windings of the chambers into those that are new and formerly unknown, a change which makes the visitor despair of ever fully unraveling all the relations of the passages and crevices along which he journeys or through which he crawls. The same massive rocks, scattered in the same profusion, meet

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the eye on every hand, for the cave has been preserved in all its beauty as an original work of nature. The bridges over rivers and stairs leading up impassable cliffs, the iron guards along places of danger, alone tell the visitor of the work of man.

If the visitor enter the great cavern in company with a chemist he will come forth well versed in Nature's secrets. For here he will learn how water charged with carbon dioxide has served as Nature's graving tools. On the roofs and walls he will discover the effects which iron and manganese oxides yield on a background of gray limestone. He will learn something of crystallization and the beautiful forms which these masses of sulphate of lime and calcite assume. If he stop in the Fairy Grotto, or tarry along Gothic Avenue, or venture into some of the unfrequented passages miles away from the natural entrance, he will face enormous stalactites and tread upon massive stalagmites, the beginning of which dates thousands of years back of the Christian era. In Martha's Vineyard, beyond the rivers, he will see those wonderful botryoidal forms of calcite which give to the locality its name. If he go far within Crystal Avenue he will learn how those wonderful acicular crystals of gypsum grow and spread out into a thousand fantastic forms and simulate the flowers of the upper world, but whose petals are gigantic in comparison. Now and then he will see these fanciful beauties growing in plain defiance of the laws of gravitation

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and bending and twisting in a thousand devious ways. In the almost complete absence of water he will wonder how these forms were originally put into solution, and ask how are reproduced those beautiful crystals which fall, as white and silently as flakes of snow, at a sudden loud sound or echo. He will wonder at the thousands of cubic yards of solid rock which have been removed, and when he returns to the upper world and visits the laboratory of his chemist friend he will be chagrined at the puny processes of art.

It is impossible to mention, less possible to describe, all the objects of interest to visitors in this most gigantic cavern of the world. In no respect have its attractions failed to meet the expectations of the intelligent visitor. To the unintelligent its story is as little understood as would be the famous lyrics of Homer or the marble poems of Praxitiles. The shells and corals which dot the walls of Echo River or boss the smooth walls of Gorin's Dome tell a story to those alone who have some intimate acquaintance with Nature. The blind insects—beetles, crickets, mites, gnats—the eyeless fish and crustaceans and leeches, the snow-white toadstools, all are meaningless to those who have never questioned the physical cause of vision. The naturalist will find here a paradise—forms of life that are unique, that range from vertebrate to worm, and these all tell him a story of antiquity and of life-law that only a naturalist may interpret. But if the visitor seeks the grand and impressive,

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THE ACUTE ANGLE

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if there be attraction in Stygian blackness, if the uncanny noises accompanying waters falling in recesses that have yet escaped search, if the unison of sounds coming from the dark and unfathomed recesses of Echo River back to the ear with a harmony and beauty that no cathedral note ever yet equaled, find a response in any human heart, then Mammoth Cave will never cease to attract visitors of every degree and from every land.

The Echo River is one of the most remarkable features in this most remarkable group of wonders. Only a small portion of its whole course is accessible to visitors, but this part is truly wonderful. At times the river flows with almost imperceptible current, while at other times it fills quite to the top the great River Hall, blotting out the Dead Sea and the River Styx, both of which are really parts of the underground stream. It is traversed by boats for a distance of quite half a mile, and a ride over its clear waters is one of the unique experiences of the world—nowhere else can it be duplicated. The voyager passes under a low arch for a short space and then the roof rises rapidly away from the water and he enters upon his subterranean water-journey in real fact. Nearly all the river is one vast resonator; its branching avenues and side crevices, its lofty roof of limestone rock, its ancient battlemented shores, all serve as reflectors of every sound, no matter how slight, and send it back intensified a thousand times, with its roughness blended into one sweet volume of glorious harmony.

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THE BOTTOMLESS PIT

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Nowhere on earth, or in it, can such rich tone, coming back to one with ever diminishing volume as it rolls down along the unknown halls and is reflected from secret chamber walls, be heard. Long experience on the part of the well-trained guides enables the production of the right notes to bring forth the wonders of Echo River, and no visitor hears them but is impressed with its glories. Time and again, for months, have we listened to these noble reverberations, until they have become a part of our musical nature.

Perhaps the largest single rock to be found, as a detached mass in the cavern, is the Giant's Coffin. Fact and fancy alike serve to make it attractive. Its mass is very great, and its weight, estimated on its measurements by taking the specific gravity of limestone as commonly given, is over two thousand tons. This immense rock has been torn from the side of the Main Cave, and when this fact was accomplished, away back in geologic times, an avenue was revealed which alone had rendered possible, until William the guide found the Corkscrew, a visit to the remoter portions of the cavern. The rock upon which the name of Giant's Coffin has been so well bestowed is entirely of limestone, with a thickness of eighteen and a total length of forty-three feet. The visitor winds around it on the usual way in which he goes to the "end of the cave" on the long route. "The Standing Rocks" are not far removed from this part of the cavern and have been similarly torn from the roof,

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which is here nearly sixty feet high. They were detached at the same time and by the same causes, whatever they were, that made the Giant's Coffin a fact. But in falling they struck upon their edge and sank deeply enough in the material of the bottom to maintain that position. They are detached masses of limestone strata nor more than two feet in thickness.

Far within the great cavern occur many interesting and fantastic groupings of stalactitic matter that require but little imagination to conceive them as simulating familiar objects. Near the end of the remarkable Pass of El Ghor—a tortuous, narrow, but lofty channel which marks the work of one of the latest of the underground streams—the walls above and on each side are one indescribable maze of calcite accumulations. Here, as indeed is true of all parts of Mammoth Cave where crystallization is in progress, the underground traveler proceeds along a pathway which is not far below the surface of the ground. The characteristic phenomena which indicate approach to the surface are: first, the dripping of waters which only enter the channels of this subterranean world at points near the surface; second, the growing stalactites, which are only at the upper levels; and, third, the sandstone strata which everywhere, in this part of Kentucky, cap the subcarboniferous limestone. When the uppermost limestone layers are worn or dissolved away, the sandstones still higher, far more friable and yielding readily to the separatory power of water,

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break away into immense masses or even into piles of rock, which often completely close the passages and limit many large avenues. The magnificent avenue which opens from the Rotunda, and which, after the celebrated ornithologist, is named Audubon's Avenue, is entirely closed at a distance of a half mile by a vast mass of rock detached, in the manner described, from above. But a journey to its end is well worth the time and toil, for here is Olive's Bower, one of the most convenient of the smaller recesses in which stalactitic formation may be seen in progress; at this locality occur some of the most beautiful of the growing stalactites. In the middle of the bower is a well of limpid water, every drop of which has played its part in adding a mite to the massive crystals above, and which are reflected from its mirrored surface. Eventually, through some secret passage, the water finds a way to the Echo River, whence, in turn, it reaches the Green River and again circulates in the world outside.

In many portions of those two wonderfully intricate channels known as Spark's Avenue and Pensico Avenue, the tourist may hear reverberations of footfalls and wonderfully sweet echoes of human voices coming apparently from the depths below. These points, several of which are particularly excellent, are really crossings of his own passage way over others still beneath him. In one certain place in Pensico Avenue the listener actually stands above a dome which, when he sounds

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THE ARMCHAIR

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a particular note, serves as a gigantic resonance box and takes up the vibrations of his voice only to send it back attuned and strengthened a thousand fold. The very earth beneath him is felt to tremble as the vibrations reach their maximum amplitude; closely listening one may hear the sweet volume of sound rolling along avenues yet untrodden by human feet, to be finally lost in the unknown depths. The celebrated side passage known as Gothic Avenue presents interesting attractions which are of a unique character. Among them are the stalactites which, abundant in this portion of the cavern, are the largest and most remarkable within its limits. Curious resemblances or historic and mythologic events together have conspired to furnish names to the largest of these. Caesar and Pompey, the Pillar of Hercules, the Oak Tree, the Bridal Chamber, the Elephants' Heads and the Wasps' Nests, are among the names which the fancy of the visitor or the caprice of the guides has affixed to these relics of former water action. Except at a single locality this avenue, which is at the higher level of the cave, is quite dry, and little, if any, change is now in progress. Beyond the usual terminus, at the rock called Lovers' Leap, the avenue is quite closed by a vast mass of sandstone debris fallen from above. But down the steep hill at which the "short route" generally ends, leads a pathway which passes through a narrow passage in the vertical wall to the left, fifty feet below, into Elbow Crevice—a portion of the

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THE BRIDAL ALTAR

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cavern which should be seen by all visitors. Beyond the crevice lie the Cooling Tub, Vulcan's Forge, Napoleon's Dome, Annetta's Dome, Shaler's Brook—in which alone are found the snow-white leeches—and several pits and domes but recently discovered. The sound of falling waters coming through small passages to the right or left informs the visitor that in this portion of the cave the processes of disintegration and solution are in active progress. From the entrance of Gothic Avenue to Annetta's Dome the visitor will have passed from the highest to the third level. Around him and near him are pits which extend downward to the level of Echo River, which is not far distant from this chaotic locality. A hundred objects are here that command one; there are poems registered in the rocks; fairy forms of bygone ages that tell of life and sunshine, and hard-by this frail record of beauty lies a fossil story of ruin and death. The observer will here find record of a former world of organisms with whose diminutive cousins only has he now intimate acquaintance. Here, in sleep and silence enshrined, they rest, small tattlers of continental secrets!

In this portion of the cave the walls best exhibit those phenomena which are always interpreted as meaning the attrition of matter carried along by running water. The passages are narrow, but high; they become broader below. In the dim light of the visitor's lamp the effect of a perspective drawing is produced on looking



HOTEL AND GROUNDS, MAMMOTH CAVE

upward, and the roofs of the avenues appear to be far away. Pebbles, derived from a thin layer of conglomerate far above, strew the pathway and tell the story of wear and denudation. Animal life is not as abundant in this locality as it is at the higher levels,

but enough may be found to demonstrate that no portion of the cavern in which water is found is devoid of some organic forms.

Perhaps visitors to Mammoth Cave are most impressed with the lofty domes and deep pits which are found in

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some portions of this underground domain. Of those that are accessible to the visitor without great danger and fatigue the best known are Gorin's Dome, the Bottomless Pit, Mammoth Dome, Napoleon's Dome, the Maelstrom, and Scylla and Charybdis, all but two of which are situated in that intricate and wonderful portion called the Labyrinth. The first named is viewed through a natural circular opening in the wall quite three-fourths the way from the bottom. Illuminated by the guides from a point still above that at which the visitor is stationed, the effect of the brilliant lights on the walls beyond, white as alabaster, fluted and folded in a thousand curious and fantastic forms, is indescribably grand and impressive. Coupled with the great size of the space, everywhere shading off into infinite gloom, is the roar of falling water, or the splash of Lilliputian cascades if seen in the dry season. Below, but beyond observation, runs a portion of Echo River, into which, from a station high above that occupied by the guide, it is possible to throw stones, the fall of which awakens ten thousand sounds and echoes. Stalactitic matter, of purest white, lends variety to the vertical walls; where this is wanting the method of work of falling water, in bygone ages, is clearly seen. Not far away is the Bottomless Pit, and above it, rising sheer to the topmost level of the cavern, is Shelby's Dome, named for the first governor of Kentucky. Its bottom, for notwithstanding its name it has one, is nearly two hundred feet below

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the level at which the observer stands. For many years it was an insurmountable obstacle to further exploration in this direction until Bishop, the original explorer of the cave, finally crossed it on a cedar sapling, but not without great danger.

This pit is one of three, the other two being Scylla and Charybdis, well named and in the relation to each other of those celebrated dangers of mythologic fame. These two pits are not to be seen by visitors, their approach being by a devious and dangerous passage which opens from River Hall, nearly a mile distant. But of all the pits which the visitor sees, that called Mammoth Dome is the largest and most impressive. From top to bottom the distance is nearly two hundred and eighty feet; while at the end, the Ruins of Karnak, formerly called the Egyptian Temples, stand out in bold relief. These giant columns indeed closely resemble the works of art of some long-lost underground race, and it does not require a very vivid imagination to see the great recesses and storied walls the scene of weird activity or to imagine them peopled with myriads of gnomes and sprites upon whose labors the visitor is an unwelcome intruder. The Mammoth Dome should be visited by every person who desires to see water at work and completing a task begun away back in Earth's history.

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ENTRANCE TO COLOSSAL CAVERN

COLOSSAL CAVERN



COLOSSAL CAVERN was discovered in 1895 by Robert Woodson, who was searching for a spring. It was first partially explored by a young man named Pike Chapman in the fall and winter of the same year and in the spring of 1896, since which time more of the cavern has been explored and a great amount of work done at the entrance—in the widening of several very narrow passages, the lowering of the floor in certain places where the space between the floor and the roof of the cave did not permit of an easy traveling, and the construction of roads. All of this work has now been completed and the trip through the cave can now be made without any great exertion in about six hours. As yet but few persons have seen the interior of the magnificent cavern and it stands to-day practically the same as when first discovered. None of the beautiful rock formations have been destroyed by vandals or blackened by the smoke of oil lamps, which are not used here. In order to preserve the natural whiteness of the beautiful rock formation it was decided to use individual acetylene lamps, whose light is much more brilliant and powerful and which do not give off the disagreeable smell that arises from oil lamps. Originally several entrances existed to Colossal Cavern, but

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GREAT BEND, GRAND AVENUE

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these were all closed by filling in the entrance with rock and earth and an entrance made at the extreme west end of the cavern. This was done for the reason that the natural entrances were very inconvenient and hard to reach, the surface land being very rough and hilly.

The entrance to Colossal Cavern is one and one-half miles from the entrance to Mammoth Cave and at the foot of a steep hill facing the west.

From the surface to the floor of the cave is two hundred and twelve feet, the descent being made down well constructed steps in the rock, the passage way averaging about three feet in width. From the foot of the steps the avenue in which we find ourselves, and which is the main avenue of the cave, extends for four miles in a southeasterly direction to the end of the cave. All the rock at this level is limestone, and after one's eyes have become accustomed to the darkness the remarkable shape of the rocks and marking in the walls and ceilings attracts the attention. There is possibly no known cavern where the action of the water and the force of eruption is as plainly seen as in Colossal Cavern and in certain localities farther on, particularly in Florence Avenue the walls are richly decorated. On the left, about half way down the steps and reached by a narrow passage about thirty feet in length is the Chinese Wall, in a room about one hundred feet in diameter and containing a pool of water, of which the Chinese Wall is the rim. The ceiling in this chamber is

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HENRY CLAY MONUMENT

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covered with thousands of small stalactites, but there are also several large ones as well as a number of large stalagmites, nearly all perfect and composed of alabaster, so clear that the light of the lantern can be plainly seen through them. One of the stalagmites, about six feet in height, has been named the Pagoda, for its close resemblance in shape to the sacred towers of the far East. At a point about two hundred feet beyond the base of the steps a path diverges to the New Discovery.

To the right of the path in the main cave is seen Uncle Tom's Pool, a beautiful spring of clear, cold water at the base of a small dome. Here will be first noticed



IN PEARLY POOL

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FLORENCE AVENUE

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the perpendicular markings in the rocks at the back and sides of the dome. Midway between Uncle Tom's Pool and Lizard Spring and directly in the center of the avenue, is Standing Rock, a huge piece of limestone four feet in thickness, eight feet in width and twelve feet in height. But a short distance beyond, and in a small grotto, is Lizard Spring. In this spring and against the far wall is a remarkable image of a large lizard, composed of flint and nearly black in color. To the left and on the wall is a large frog stool composed of the same substance. The passage to Vaughan's Dome leaves the main avenue just beyond this spring. The



SAMPSON'S PILLAR

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GRAND CROSSING

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height of this dome is one hundred and sixteen feet. The walls are beautifully marked, the marking being perpendicular. There are really two levels, the first dry, the floor being covered with sand; at the lower level, a few feet below the first, will be found a beautiful spring of clear, cold water. The acoustic properties here are remarkable, the walls of the dome serving as reflectors of every sound and sending it back in beautiful harmony, intensified a thousand times.

Again following the main avenue we come to Everett Rock and the Grand Crossing, so called from the fact that Florence Avenue crosses the main avenue at this point. Everett Rock is a large detached rock that has fallen from the ceiling and leans against the wall to the left. Back of this rock can be found many beautiful formations of gypsum. For some distance down the main avenue, on the wall to the right, will be seen thousands of beautiful gypsum formations closely resembling flowers of various kinds, such as roses, daisies and lilies. In the Ruins of Carthage, where enormous rocks have from time to time fallen from the ceiling, will be found the largest detached rock in the cavern. It is forty feet long, fifteen feet wide and about six feet thick. From these ruins we pass through a large but very rough passage to Sampson's Pillar, which is composed of limestone and about thirty feet in diameter. On the far side will be observed the profile of a large bird in flight, the whiteness of the stone in the figure forming a noticeable

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MONUMENT HILL

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contrast with the dark stone background of the pillar. To the right of the pillar will be seen the stern of a large ship, the rock being so smooth and the outlines so graceful that it looks as if carved by hand. Passing through more rough passages, we come to Table Rock at the foot of Sandstone Mountain. When at the top of this mountain the visitor is but twenty feet below the surface of the earth. A natural bridge is crossed just beyond the base of Sandstone Mountain, and in the right wall about fifteen feet from the floor is noticed the exit of an avenue which has not as yet been explored.

Following the main avenue we enter another large chamber, whose floor is covered with large loose rock and whose walls and ceiling plainly show the great force of the water and eruption which were the chief agencies that formed this remarkable cavern. This chamber has been named the Ruins of Martinique. To the right is the entrance to Register Avenue, through which we will pass on the return trip. Continuing, we enter the Great Bend, which name has been given the main avenue at this point. For over five hundred feet the passage way here attains a width of about thirty feet, with an average height to the ceiling of forty feet, and making a gentle bend first to the left and thence to the right. At the extreme end of the Great Bend in the wall will be readily seen the Woman's Head, Shadow of a Man, the Lion's Head and the Snowball Rock. Passing Monument Hill to the left, we enter a rotunda in which has been built

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EVERETT ROCK

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a dining room. The roof of the dining room is a large overhanging rock, whose surface is noticeably smooth. A good board floor has been built over the loose sand and benches and tables placed in position for the convenience of visitors who desire to rest and eat their luncheon here. To the left of the dining room is a passage leading to Bed Quilt Cave, distant about seven miles.

After a short rest we proceed to Cascade Hall, passing the entrance to Bicycle Avenue, through which we will also pass on the return trip. Cascade Hall is so named on account of a small stream of water that falls from the ceiling, forty feet above, into a deep pit filled with rough rock. The hall is nearly circular, and has two exits in addition to the passage by which we entered. The passage to the right leads to Colossal Dome, the one to the left to the end of the cavern.

The trip from Cascade Hall to the bottom of Colossal Dome and back is probably the most wonderful that can be made by human being. It is not possible to describe it. In no way can its attractions fail to meet the expectations of the visitor. It is the feature of the cavern; the greatest dome, either natural or artificial, in the world. In getting to the dome we cross the highest elevation in the cavern, and just before commencing the descent pass under the ladder which connects with the short avenue leading to a bridge which has been built across the dome and one hundred and sixty-seven feet

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COLOSSAL DOME

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above the floor. Descending the first flight of steps we notice to the right several beautiful stalactites and the upper portion of the largest known stalagmite in the world. This stalagmite is ninety feet in height and has been named Henry Clay Monument. A fitting column for so great a statesman. At the base of the first flight of stairs, and to the left, is a synclinal arch, which scientists claim is the greatest curiosity in the cavern from a scientific standpoint, demonstrating as it does how the thick strata had yielded to the enormous pressure from above and was crushed into reverse arches. Passing through a magnificent arch we descend some rude stone steps, winding around the base of Henry Clay Monument, and suddenly find ourselves in what seems like open space. Aloft and around us is utter darkness. We are at the lowest level of the cavern, two hundred and forty feet below the entrance. The acetylene lamp throws a ray of light across to the farthest wall, fifty-six feet distant, but flashed upward in vain. The guide's ingenuity, however, will permit us to catch a glimpse of the apex of the dome, the grandest room in all this temple of silence and night. By means of a rope that runs through a pulley that is fastened in the wooden timbers of the bridge above, a fire basket containing oiled rags, chemicals and a quantity of magnesium ribbon, after being ignited, is slowly hoisted. Large drops of water fall like shot from the top of the dome to the floor, striking like gems as they fall and

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STANDING ROCK

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adding their music to the majestic occasion. We raise and lower the fire basket at will, thus displaying to advantage the series of immense rings, each eight to ten feet thick, that make up the walls. These rings are differently tinted and some of them covered with small stalactites. The echoes in the dome are remarkable and are even more melodious than those in Vaughan's Dome. About half of the floor space is covered with a fine pool of clear cold water, which escapes under a very low ledge and wanders off to regions as yet unexplored.

We leave this enchanting spot with regret, but there is much yet, both interesting and beautiful, to be seen. Passing again through Cascade Hall we turn to the left and after crossing Cascade Mountain, noting the Hanging Rock and Hunts Hollow (a dry pool), we enter Pearly Pool, pausing for a moment on the very edge of a pit eighty-six feet deep. To the right, just beyond the pit, are mammoth stalactites and stalagmites, and for the next five hundred feet the walls and ceilings are covered with superb formations of alabaster stalactites and stalagmites, some very grotesque, resembling various birds and animals. Magnificent is the sight and there are none but who stop to admire and to marvel at the greatness of Nature's handiwork. Nearly in the center of this chamber is a basin about four feet in diameter, whose sides glisten with thousands of cave pearls. Just back of it is the remains of an old stalagmite, about three feet in diameter, known as the Caldron.

Subterranean Wonders of Kentucky

Passing through Kangaroo Bend we enter Snowy Valley. Here the floor is thickly covered with fine flakes of pure white gypsum, which is constantly falling from the ceiling above and greatly resembles snow. The end of the cavern is but a short distance beyond Snowy Valley. Just before reaching the end we notice to the right an avenue which has not as yet been explored beyond a very short distance. The ceiling is very low, but some very fine stalactites and stalagmites can be seen. The cavern ends in a "tumble-down," where flow chalybeate springs whose waters have valuable medicinal properties. Considerable work has been done here in an endeavor to get around the "fall-in," but so far, owing to sliding rock, the efforts have been unsuccessful.

On the return trip to the entrance the route is somewhat varied by passing through Register Avenue, where visitors will be permitted to write their names on the white walls, and through Florence Avenue. The floor in both these avenues is very smooth and hard and the walls beautifully marked by the action of water. Two very deep pits are to be seen just before reaching the exit of Florence Avenue.

Mammoth Cave

Colossal Cavern

Are near the Main Line of the

Louisville & Nashville R. R.

in Edmonson County, Kentucky; are 90 miles from Louisville, 200 miles from Cincinnati, 183 miles from Evansville, 461 miles from Chicago, 347 miles from St. Louis, 289 miles from Memphis, 96 miles from Nashville, 303 miles from Birmingham and 720 miles from New Orleans. Branch railroad direct to the Cave from Glasgow Junction.

A trip through the Short Route in Mammoth Cave occupies about four hours and the Long Route about nine hours.

A trip through Colossal Cavern occupies about five hours. Colossal Cavern can be reached by wagon in less than thirty minutes from the Mammoth Cave Hotel.

REGULAR RATES

Board at Hotel, per day, \$2.00 and \$2.50

For all information as to rates and accommodations at the hotel, address Manager Mammoth Cave Hotel, Mammoth Cave, Ky.

MAMMOTH CAVE

Cave Fees, Long Route, \$3.00

Cave Fees, Short Route, 2.00

COLOSSAL CAVERN

Cave Fees, \$2.00

These charges include services of guide, lights, etc.

REDUCTION

For a party of 10, reduction of 25 per cent from above rates for cave fees; for a party of 50, reduction of 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per cent, and for a party of 100, reduction of 50 per cent.

STOP-OVER ALLOWED

on all through tickets within their limits, and regardless of limit on all through tickets the destination of which is a point on the Louisville & Nashville Railroad.

For other information as to railroad rates, routes, etc., address

C. B. COMPTON,

Traffic Manager,

C. L. STONE,

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